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Editor in Chief

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On the cover: Photomicrograph of crystals of vitamin B₁,
(Dennis Kunkel, University of Hawaii)

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base pairs of the deoxyribonucleic acid of that gene. ('point myū'lā'shən)

point of arrival [NAV] The position which a craft will reach after following specified courses for specified distances from a point of departure. ('point əv ə'rīv-əl)

point of contraflexure [MECH] A point at which the direction of bending changes. Also known as point of inflection. ('point əv kən-trə'flek-shər)

point of control [IND ENG] Fraction defective in those lots that have a probability of .50 of acceptance according to a specific sampling acceptance plan. ('point əv kən'trōl)

point of departure See departure. ('point əv di'pārchər)

point of destination [NAV] The point at which the final course from the point of departure ends, exclusive of the courses needed to reach a berth or runway. ('point əv des-tə'nā'shən)

point of division [MATH] The point that divides the line segment joining two given points in a given ratio. ('point əv di'vizh-ən)

point of fall [MECH] The point in the curved path of a falling projectile that is level with the muzzle of the gun. Also known as level point. ('point əv fōl)

point of frog [CIV ENG] The place of intersection of the gage lines of the main track and a turnout. ('point əv 'frōg)

point of impact [ORD] The point at which a bullet, bomb, or projectile strikes. ('point əv 'im,pəkt)

point of inflection [MATH] A point where a plane curve changes from the concave to the convex relative to some fixed line; equivalently, if the function determining the curve has a second derivative, this derivative changes sign at this point. Also known as inflection point. [MECH] See point of contraflexure. ('point əv in'flek-shən)

point of intersection [CIV ENG] The point at which two straight sections or tangents to a road curve or rail curve meet when extended. ('point əv ,in-tər'sek-shən)

point of no return [NAV] A point along an aircraft track beyond which the aircraft's fuel supply will not permit it to return to its own or some other associated base but must continue in attempt to reach its destination. ('point əv 'nō rī'tərn)

point of operation [MET] That portion of a metal-forming press in which the material is positioned and the work is performed. ('point əv ,āp-ə'rā'shən)

point-of-origin system [COMPUT SCI] A computer system in which data collection occurs at the point where the data are actually created, as in a point-of-sale terminal. ('point əv 'ār-əjən ,sistəm)

point of osculation See double cusp. ('point əv ,ās-kyə'lā'shən)

point-of-sale terminal [COMPUT SCI] A computer-connected terminal used in place of a cash register in a store, for customer checkout and such added functions as recording inventory data, transferring funds from the customer's bank account to the merchant's bank account, and checking credit on charged or charge-card purchases; the terminals can be modified for many nonmerchandising applications, such as checkout of books in libraries. Abbreviated POS terminal. ('point əv 'sāl 'termī-nəl)

point of switch [CIV ENG] That place in a track where a car passes from the main track to a turnout. ('point əv 'swich)

point of tangency [CIV ENG] The point at which a road curve or railway curve becomes straight or changes its curvature. Also known as tangent point. ('point əv 'tan-jən-sē)

point-placement [AGR] Positioning of fertilizer or some other agricultural chemical within the length of the seed row or in the specific location where the seed is planted. ('point ,plā's-mənt)

point projection electron microscope [ELECTR] An electron microscope in which a real or virtual point source of electrons produces a highly magnified shadow. ('point prə'jek-shən ,lek-trān 'mīkrə-skōp)

point rainfall [METEOROL] The rainfall during a given time interval (or often one storm) measured in a rain gage, or an estimate of the amount which might have been measured at a given point. ('point 'rān,fōl)

point set [MATH] A collection of points in a geometrical or topological space. ('point ,set)

point-set topology [MATH] See general topology. ('point ,set tə'pāl-ə-jē)

point-slope form [MATH] The equation of a straight line in the form $y - y_1 = m(x - x_1)$, where m is the slope of the line and

(x_1, y_1) are the coordinates of a given point on the line in a cartesian coordinate system. ('point ,slōp ,fōrm)

points of the compass See compass points. ('pōins əv ðə 'kām-pəs)

point source [CIV ENG] A municipal or industrial wastewater discharge through a discrete pipe or channel. [PHYS] A source of radiation having definite position but no extension in space; this is an ideal which is a good approximation for distances from the source sufficiently large compared to the dimensions of the source. ('point ,sōrs)

point-source light [ELEC] A special lamp in which the radiating element is concentrated in a small physical area. ('point ,sōrs ,lit)

point spectrum [MATH] Those eigenvalues in the spectrum of a linear operator between Banach spaces whose corresponding eigenvectors are nonzero and of finite norm. ('point ,spek-trēm)

point system [IND ENG] 1. A system of job evaluation wherein job requirements are rated according to a scale of point values. 2. A wage incentive plan based on points instead of man-minutes. ('point ,sistəm)

point target [ELECTROMAG] In radar, an object which returns a target signal by reflection from a relatively simple discrete surface; such targets are ships, aircraft, projectiles, missiles, and buildings. [ORD] A precise target of small dimensions. ('point ,tārg-ət)

point-to-point communication [COMMUN] Radio communication between two fixed stations. ('point tə 'point kə ,myū-nə'kā'shən)

point-to-point programming [CONT SYS] A method of programming a robot in which each major change in the robot's path of motion is recorded and stored for later use. ('point tə 'point ,prō ,gram-īŋ)

point transposition [ELEC] Transposition, usually in an open-wire line, which is executed within a distance comparable to the wire separation, without material distortion of the normal wire configuration outside this distance. ('point ,tranz-pə ,zish-ən)

pointwise convergence [MATH] A sequence of functions f_1, f_2, \dots defined on a set S converges pointwise to a function f if the sequence $f_1(x), f_2(x), \dots$ converges to $f(x)$ for each x in S . ('point ,wīz kən'vərjəns)

poise [FL MECH] A unit of dynamic viscosity equal to the dynamic viscosity of a fluid in which there is a tangential force 1 dyne per square centimeter resisting the flow of two parallel fluid layers past each other when their differential velocity is 1 centimeter per second per centimeter of separation. Abbreviated P. ('pōiz)

poised stream [HYD] A stream that is neither eroding nor depositing sediment. ('pōīzd 'strēm)

poiseuille [FL MECH] A unit of dynamic viscosity of a fluid in which there is a tangential force of 1 newton per square meter resisting the flow of two parallel layers past each other when their differential velocity is 1 meter per second per meter of separation; equal to 10 poise; used chiefly in France. Abbreviated PL ('pwā'zə-ē)

Poiseuille flow [FL MECH] The steady flow of an incompressible fluid parallel to the axis of a circular pipe of infinite length, produced by a pressure gradient along the pipe. ('pwā'zə-ē ,flō)

Poiseuille's law [FL MECH] The law that the volume flow of an incompressible fluid through a circular tube is equal to $\pi/8$ times the pressure differences between the ends of the tube, times the fourth power of the tube's radius divided by the product of the tube's length and the dynamic viscosity of the fluid. ('pwā'zə-ēz ,lō)

poison [ATOM PHYS] A substance which reduces the phosphorescence of a luminescent material. [CHEM] A substance that exerts inhibitive effects on catalysts, even when present only in small amounts; for example, traces of sulfur or lead will poison platinum-based catalysts. [ELECTR] A material which reduces the emission of electrons from the surface of a cathode. [MATER] A substance that in relatively small doses has an action that either destroys life or impairs seriously the functions of organs or tissues. [NUCLEO] A substance that absorbs neutrons without any fission resulting, and thereby lowers the reactivity of a nuclear reactor. ('pōiz-ən)

poison gas [MATER] A substance employed in chemical warfare to disable enemy troops; may be a gas, or a liquid or solid